



## Household Guide to Illicit Discharges

In 2004, the City of Gallatin enacted a Storm Water Ordinance that made it illegal to discharge pollutants into the storm water drainage system or waterways. This Ordinance is required by the Storm Water Phase II legislation and the Clean Water Act. It is designed to help maintain and protect the water quality of the water bodies within and surrounding our fair city.

### *What is a storm water drainage system or waterway?*

- **Storm water** is the water from rain, snow, or ice which flows over the ground or pavement without soaking into the ground.
- **The storm water drainage system** includes the roadside ditches, gutters, inlets, catch basins, and underground pipes that collect the storm water and carry it away from our streets, parking lots, and yards.
- **Waterways** include the creeks, lakes, and rivers within and surrounding our City. Storm water can flow directly into these waterways, so they are part of the storm water drainage system too.
- **Did you know?** Anything that is washed into the storm water drainage system ends up in our waterways. That's because, unlike water from our kitchens and bathrooms, storm water is not treated before it is released into our waterways.

### *What does the ordinance prohibit?*

- Directly discharging anything that is not composed entirely of storm water into the storm sewer system or into the waterways is prohibited.
- Connecting any structure that carries any liquid other than storm water into the storm sewer system or into the waterways is prohibited.

### *What is the penalty for a violation?*

- Anyone who knowingly violates the City's Storm Water Ordinance on illicit discharge can be found guilty of a **Class 1 misdemeanor**.
- Inadvertent or unknowing violations can result in a **civil penalty – a fine of \$250-\$1000**.
- **Violators will also have to pay for the cost of testing, clean up, and disposal of their pollutant.**

**You can report illicit discharges to the City of Gallatin at 451-5965.**

### *What does the ordinance allow?*

Discharges from several everyday activities are allowed to flow into the storm sewer system and waterways. For example:

- Draining the water from a swimming pool, but *only after* the water has been dechlorinated (usually 2 to 3 days after the last day that chlorine was added – use a pool water test kit to be sure).
- Washing cars *only at home*.
- Watering lawns and irrigating landscapes.
- Flushing water lines.
- Water from crawl spaces and foundation drains.
- Condensation from air conditioners.
- Runoff from springs or drinking water sources.
- Discharges from fire fighting activities.
- Discharges that are allowed under the terms of a Federal or State permit.

However, if any of these activities are found to be causing water pollution, the City will ask that the activity be stopped or be conducted differently so that our waters are not polluted.

### *How can I prevent storm water pollution at home?*

- Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, or any other chemicals down the storm drain. *One quart of oil can contaminate 250,000 gallons of water.*
- If you spill motor oil or other fluids, do not hose the spill into the gutter or ditch. Instead, spread kitty litter or sawdust to absorb the spill then sweep it up and put it in the trash.
- Inspect and maintain your car to keep oil, antifreeze, and other fluids from leaking.
- Brushes used with water-based (latex) paint should be rinsed in the sink. If you have a small amount of paint left in the can, stuff it loosely with newspaper, let the paint dry out completely, and put it in the trash.
- Save and reuse paint thinner and turpentine whenever you can.
- Try to minimize your use of pesticides and herbicides (insect and weed killers). They are deadly to fish, birds, and other wildlife. If you must use them, make sure that you are using the correct product and the proper amounts.
- It is better to fertilize your lawn in the Fall than in the Spring. A soil testing kit can tell you what nutrients your yard really needs. Look for low phosphate fertilizers. Most mature lawns need more nitrogen than phosphate.
- Please ***do not dump leaves and grass clippings*** into the ditches, storm drains, or waterways. They clog the storm sewers and can cause flooding. Decaying leaves and grass add excess nutrients to our waters, which can cause algae to grow too fast and kill the aquatic life.
- Compost your leaves and grass clippings, and use the compost to enrich and condition your soil. You can also bag your leaves and put them out for pick up by the City.

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*What should I do with hazardous household products?*

- Some garages, gas stations, and oil changing facilities will accept used motor oil and antifreeze for recycling. Visit <http://state.tn.us/environment/swm/oil/> to find your nearest used oil or antifreeze recycler.
- Alkaline batteries sold after May 13, 1996, have no mercury added and may be discarded in the regular trash. Nickel-cadmium (Ni-Cd), nickel metal hydride (Ni-MH), lithium ion (Li-Ion) and small sealed lead-acid (Pb) batteries may be recycled through the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation. You may find a drop-off location near you by entering your ZIP code at <http://www.rbrc.org/>.
- The Tennessee Department of Agriculture runs an [Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Program](#) that will accept pesticides from farmers.
- For more information visit <http://www.epa.gov/garbage/hhw.htm> or <http://state.tn.us/environment/swm/hhw/faq.shtml#Q6> to learn more about what you can do to properly dispose of hazardous household products.

This is one of a series of Fact Sheets about surface water quality issues in the City of Gallatin. The series is produced by the Engineering Division. Our mission is to protect, maintain, and restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the City waterways and surrounding waterways in order to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of our community.